

Dustin Stewart

To: Kathleen O'Neal
Subject: RE: URGENT: Fire Sprinkler Hearing

From: Kathleen O'Neal [<mailto:director@billingsshabitat.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 10:49 AM
To: dstewart@montana.com
Subject: Fire Sprinkler Hearing

While it is impossible for me to attend a hearing, as our office is in Billings, let me speak on behalf of Habitat for Humanity. I believe I also speak for others building specifically for the low-income housing market.

If this requirement were to pass, it would add a tremendous amount to the cost of construction and very possibly eliminate many of the families we are able to help through the Habitat for Humanity program in the state of Montana.

There are Habitat for Humanity 13 affiliates, building throughout the state and while, perhaps, we don't build huge numbers of homes, our impact is significant to a market that has no other avenue to homeownership.

I strongly urge the legislature to "prohibit fire sprinklers from being mandatory in new home construction."

If the legislature - or any other government authority - really cares about low income people living in "slum" substandard housing (usually rentals) then perhaps the government would consider making an inspection mandatory for every rental dwelling before it can be rented to a tenant. While fire is devastating, wiring and other substandard issues cause far more health and humanity issues.

Thanks for all you do.

Kathleen O'Neal
Executive Director
Habitat for Humanity
Mid-Yellowstone Valley
406-652-0960